

## Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON

1. WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT WE OPEN DIALOGUE WITH  
ASSAD ON THE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.  
HIS COOPERATION OR AT LEAST NON-OBSTRUCTION OF ANY EFFORTS  
TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM WILL BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. WE  
WANT VERY MUCH, THEREFORE, TO GET AS FULL AS POSSIBLE AN  
IDEA OF HIS PRESENT THINKING AND WHAT HE IS LIKELY TO DO.  
WE ALSO WANT HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE APPRECIATE HIS  
SITUATION AND ARE ANXIOUS SO FAR AS POSSIBLE TO WORK WITH

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HIM FOR A SOLUTION. IF YOU FIND DIFFICULTY IN GETTING TO  
ASSAD, YOU SHOULD TALK TO KHADDAM BUT, IN THAT EVENT, WE  
HOPE YOU CAN ALSO TRY TO REACH ASSAD THROUGH A PARALLEL  
CHANNEL SUCH AS DAOUDI TO CONVEY THE MESSAGE.

2. YOU SHOULD GIVE ASSAD OUR ESTIMATE OF THE PRESENT  
SITUATION AND EXPLAIN OUR THINKING ABOUT WHAT MUST BE DONE.

ISRAELIS HAVE INFORMED US THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO MOVE TO THE LITANI, AND WE HAVE STRONGLY URGED THEM NOT TO CONDUCT FURTHER AIR STRIKES SUCH AS THOSE AGAINST CIVILIAN TARGETS IN THE BEIRUT AREA. THEY HAVE FURTHER TOLD US THAT THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF REMAINING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, BUT THEY INSIST THAT THERE MUST BE ARRANGEMENTS TO PREVENT

FURTHER ATTACKS ON ISRAEL ACROSS THE LEBANESE BORDER AFTER THEY WITHDRAW.

3. YOU SHOULD NOTE TO ASSAD THAT WE HAVE COME OUT PUBLICLY FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND REPEATED OUR POSITION DEPLORING VIOLENCE THAT RESULTS IN SUFFERING OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS BY EITHER SIDE. WE BELIEVE URGENT TASK NOW IS TO ESTABLISH AT AN EARLY DATE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL RESTORE THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND CONTROL OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN THE AREA SOUTH OF THE LITANI. WE ARE EXPLORING WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND AT THE UNITED NATIONS HOW THIS MIGHT BEST BE ACHIEVED; ONE POSSIBILITY IS A TEMPORARY UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE WHOSE MISSION WOULD BE TO ASSIST AND MAKE POSSIBLE EARLY RESTORATION OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY, AND ULTIMATE REPLACEMENT OF THE UN FORCE BY THE LEBANESE ARMY IN MAINTAINING SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE SOUTH. SINCE THIS IS THE SAME GENERAL GOAL THAT SYRIA AND LEBANON HAD SOUGHT IN THE SHTOURA AGREEMENTS, WE WOULD HOPE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING  
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AND COOPERATION OF SYRIA. WE ARE, OF COURSE, CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON AND WILL BE GUIDED BY ITS VIEWS.

4. YOU SHOULD DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING AS YOU THINK BEST TO SUPPORT THIS CASE WITH ASSAD. YOU CAN POINT OUT THAT:

-- IT IS CERTAINLY IN THE INTEREST OF NO ONE TO HAVE THE IDF AND THE ADF IN SUCH CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ONE ANOTHER IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND REPLACEMENT BY OTHER SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE IMPERATIVE.

-- EVEN AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, WE MUST PRECLUDE A SITUATION IN WHICH IDF FORCES WILL REPEAT THIS OPERATION, WHICH IN OUR JUDGMENT THEY WILL DO IF ISRAELIS ARE ATTACKED OR FIRED UPON ACROSS THE LEBANESE BORDER BY HOSTILE FORCES. THIS WOULD BE A HIGHLY DANGEROUS SITUATION.

-- WE, LIKE ASSAD, ARE COMMITTED TO THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON AND THE RESTORATION OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE FURTHER SUFFERING BY INNOCENT

CIVILIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY MAKING SOUTH LEBANON A BATTLE GROUND. THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES IS TO RESTORE SOUTHERN LEBANON TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL UNDER CONDITIONS OF SECURITY AND STABILITY.

5. YOU CAN SAY TO ASSAD THAT, ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THAT OUR VIEWS DIFFER AS TO HOW A JUST AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WE BELIEVE WE SHARE WITH HIM A COMMON COMMITMENT TO THIS PURPOSE. WE BELIEVE, LIKE ASSAD, THAT THERE MUST BE A JUST SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. A SITUATION, HOWEVER, WHERE PALESTINIAN FORCES ATTACK ISRAEL FROM SOUTH LEBANON OR ELSEWHERE, AND ISRAEL RESPONDS  
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MILITARILY, DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE OR OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. IT IS A REAL AND SERIOUS HANDICAP TO THE U.S. IN TRYING EFFECTIVELY TO USE OUR INFLUENCE, AS WE BELIEVE ASSAD WANTS US TO DO, TO GET A JUST PEACE. OUR EFFORTS REQUIRE THE SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, AND SUCH OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE SIMPLY MAKE OUR TASK MORE DIFFICULT.

6. SINCE SYRIA HAS A VITAL INTEREST IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO CONSULT FULLY AND FRANKLY WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD. WE URGE HIM TO CONVEY THOROUGH YOU HIS OWN VIEWS OF THE SITUATION AND OF WHAT CAN BE DONE TO RESOLVE IT. WE THINK IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO REMAIN IN CLOSE CONSULTATIONS IN THE DAYS AHEAD TO ACHIEVE AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND A SOLUTION TO THE SOUTH LEBANON PROBLEM THAT WILL PROTECT HIS INTERESTS AND OUR LARGER MUTUAL INTERESTS IN CREATING CONDITIONS THAT WILL MAKE POSSIBLE A REAL AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE.

7. RE DAMASCUS 1452, JUST RECEIVED, YOU MAY TELL ASSAD THAT, IF AGREEABLE TO HIM, WE WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY THROUGH YOU, AFTER BEGIN'S VISIT, A REPORT ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND OUR VIEWS ON HOW WE CAN USE THEM TO MOVE TOWARD COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT CONSULTATION WITH ASSAD ON PEACE PROBLEMS IS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST AND HOPE WE CAN CONTINUE TO DISCUSS WITH HIM.

8. FYI. OBVIOUSLY, THE CRUCIAL QUESTION IS WHETHER ASSAD CAN BE PERSUADED THAT IT IS IN HIS INTEREST TO SEE SOUTH LEBANON DEFUSED AND A BUFFER ZONE CREATED. WE HOPE HE MAY ACQUIESCE AN EFFECTIVE PLO REMOVAL FROM THE SOUTH  
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SO LONG AS THE ONUS FOR THE ACTION IS NOT ON HIM. THIS  
WOULD, OF COURSE, REQUIRE HIS COOPERATION IN PREVENTING  
PLO MOVEMENT SOUTH OF THE LITANI. WOULD APPRECIATE  
EMBASSY JUDGMENT ON WHAT HE IS LIKELY TO DO. END FYI.

9. AT YOUR DISCRETION, YOU MAY MAKE CLEAR TO ASSAD THAT  
WE HAVE NOTED SYRIAN RESTRAINT AND FOREBEARANCE DURING  
THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS.  
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